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ABSTRACT

A qualitative multimethod study identified the beliefs about writing instruction held by seven full-time English instructors at Central Arizona College Signal Peak Campus. Data were collected through interviews, document analysis, and surveys. Research questions examined how faculty members viewed themselves as writing teachers, what curriculum models the faculty members followed, what assumptions faculty members had about writing and the meaning of the writing process, and how the department's "philosophy of composition" can be defined. Data were used to construct the Faculty Beliefs Continuum, with the opposite ends being represented by "Meaning Controls Form" and "Form Controls Meaning." Tables display each faculty member's key beliefs concerning characteristics of effective writers, managing of English 101, class activities, grammar, and philosophy of composition. Results indicated that the departmental philosophy was represented in the belief systems of individual instructors, but that faculty practices did not always mirror outcomes or competencies which were recommended or required in the department's course guidelines. (Contains 35 references, 7 tables, and 1 figure. An appendix illustrates design elements in data collection and analysis.) (RS)

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An Overview of Identifying A Community College English Department's Beliefs About Writing Instruction: A Qualitative Study

A Paper Presented at the
Arizona Educational Research Organization
Conference

November 4, 1993

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify the beliefs about writing instruction held by seven full time English instructors at Central Arizona College-Signal Peak Campus. This qualitative multimethod study answered the following research questions: (1) How do faculty members view themselves as writing teachers? (2) What curriculum models do the faculty members follow? (3) What assumptions does each faculty member have about writing and the meaning of the writing process? How can the collective department "philosophy of composition" be defined?

Data for this study were collected using multimethod qualitative techniques. Three types of data collection were utilized. The researcher collected qualitative data using interviews, document analysis, and surveys. The data were reduced and described using qualitative data displays.

INTRODUCTION

At the community college level, English departments are primarily concerned with teaching writing, especially developmental writing and the traditional freshman composition sequence (Raines, 1990). All transfer courses which are taught at Arizona community colleges are carefully articulated with Arizona state universities. This promotes a standardization of course content throughout the community college system. But does this ensure that composition students receive the same instruction? What does it mean to teach a writing course?

Community college English departments maintain course syllabi which outline the required objectives for each course. Still, all instructors provide unique learning experiences in their classrooms. The kind of textbook an instructor uses and the course syllabus the instructor gives to students reveal part of what the instructor believes about composition. Yet, individual teachers have assumptions about English, about curriculum, and about writing, which fashion their personal instructional objectives and teaching methodologies. Gere et al. (1992) note that teachers' perspectives about English drive their curriculum decisions and teaching styles.

Purpose of the Study

Any student who has taken courses from different English teachers would recognize the problem which has driven the creation of this study. Different teachers have different methods, different objectives, and different expectations in the writing classroom. While composition research has revealed much about the writing process and writing instruction, it has not addressed the writing instructor's personal beliefs about writing. The purpose of this study was to identify those personal beliefs about composition which drive a community college English department's instructional practices.

Statement of the Problem

This study identified a community college English department's beliefs about writing instruction. This study made an authentic, context-sensitive connection between the literature and practice, between content and context. Because of its emphasis on field-focus and naturalistic data collection methodology, this study provided a view of English teachers not obtainable through

more traditional means. Smith (1987) notes that context-sensitivity requires a researcher to consider the physical, social, historical, and environmental forces which influence the way people think and act. Typically, information about writing instruction is gathered using instruments such as Likert-scale based surveys or questionnaires. But survey forms by themselves do not reveal a teacher's personal beliefs about composition. Rather, they provide a researcher-driven schemata which outlines the researcher's perspectives and asks the evaluants to respond to them.

Research Questions

The following questions were answered in this study:

1. How do faculty members view themselves as writing teachers?
2. What curriculum models do the faculty members follow?
3. What assumptions does each faculty member have about writing and the meaning of the writing process?
4. How can the collective department "philosophy of composition" be defined?

Delimitations

The purpose of this study was to provide a rich description of a certain situation. The full time English faculty at the Signal Peak Campus of Central Arizona College who teach English 101 were the subjects of this study. Because it is context-sensitive, views expressed by the Signal Peak faculty are most representative of that college department. However, those who teach writing at all levels are driven by the same theories and by the same body of knowledge. Steven North (1987) calls this body of beliefs composition ***lore***.

Limitations

Marshall and Rossman (1989) have identified the strengths and weaknesses found in the data collection methodologies used in qualitative research. The use of three different data collection techniques (interviews, surveys, and document analysis) improved the construct validity of the study. Internal validity was strengthened through the interview guide process and the pattern matching data analysis process. The literature review and the detailed description of the study's methodologies strengthened the study's external validity. The reliability and validity of the instrumentation was enhanced by the use of an expert panel-validated interview guide and survey.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This review of literature provides a contextual framework for a qualitative study concerned with the assumptions composition teachers have about writing instruction. The review of literature provides what Eisner (1991) terms an anticipatory schemata: knowledge that allows the qualitative researcher to acknowledge, sort, and select from data.

Composition Lore

Composition instruction is shaped by the immense body of knowledge that comes from teacher training, research, publications, and tradition. More specifically, teachers, according to Hamilton-Weiler (1988), encounter new ideas in four major ways: a) personal choice, b) education, c) incidental exposure, and d) administrative requests. North (1987) calls this pool of beliefs and ideas "*lore*": not always scientific, but concerned with what has worked, essentially experiential, manifested in textbooks and syllabi. Lore becomes a significant part of what Clark and Florio (1983) call the writing instructor's "professional memory":

> [I]t includes a teacher's implicit theories about the commonplaces of education (subject matter, learners, and context) and his or her expectations and commitments concerning the particular class and task of interest . . . . Taken together, these [principles of learning] constitute a teacher's set of criteria for effective writing instruction. (p. 242)

Composition instruction has changed very slowly– an emphasis on form and correctness has dominated writing instruction in this country since Puritan times. British and American scholars gathered at Dartmouth University in 1966 to discuss issues related to English studies. The question asked by many scholars just prior to the Dartmouth Conference–"What is English?"– is still a fundamental problem many writing instructors cannot resolve (Harris, 1991).

The pre-Dartmouth conference opinion that English is fixed subject matter which can be taught has slowly been replaced by the research– based belief that English is fluid, that teaching English involves "constant renewal, constant rediscovery, constant restoration" (Gere, Fairbanks, Howes, and Schaafsma, 1992, p. 15.). Harris (1991) further describes the movement: "[This was] a movement from language as what one learns about to what someone does; movement from transmission of skills to growth experiences" (p. 631).

Tradition, institutional expectations, and social forces influence the composition teacher's instructional principles– the principles which contribute to teaching behavior and methodologies. Fox (1991) notes that "knowledge of institutional history and the social forces which shape it help define and provide teachers with a general interpretive frame from which they can seek to understand the relationships between themselves, their students, and day to day classroom experience" (p.111).

Product Methodologies

Hurlbert (1988) writes that "product pedagogy encourages students to conceive of themselves as individual creators of discourse who must rely on their own abilities and applications for success and progress" (p. 9). Rose (1983), in his study of remedial writers, proposes that "many of our evaluation schemes focus on production alone. We do not include issues of a writer's intentions, nor take any account of a writer's relation to audience in any full way" (p. 116). Additionally, researchers have became aware that previously accepted techniques used to teach writing– drills in grammar, emphasis on correctness– do not help students learn to write. Smith (1983) writes "[the] pervasiveness of drills, exercises and rote learning of programmatic literacy activities is such that some teachers tend to lose track of what writing is really for" (p. 566).

Process Methodologies

Process methodologies place emphasis on the creation of text. Scholars in the 1970's, such as Young (1976), studied the psycholinguistic processes which are involved in composition. For example, studies about problem-solving have made significant contributions in this area. Many researchers view composition as a problem-solving process and have drawn upon studies in heuristics and tagmemics to discuss writers' difficulties with invention, with the creation of text. Process methodologies emphasize the complex activities associated with composition. Hayes & Flower (1983) write: "The act of writing is best described not as a sequence of stages but as a set of distinguishable processes the writer must orchestrate– task environment, long term memory, the writing process". . . (p. 207).

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The New Pedagogy

Scholars sometimes refer to current trends in composition instruction as the "new pedagogy." Young (1987) writes, "In place of traditional composition is a conception of rhetoric as a special kind of behavior–a linguistic activity carried on within a social context– and furthermore, an activity that makes meaning as well as transmits it" (p. 1). Teachers and researchers have come to see that writing is more than form (product) or creation (process); rather, it is a meaning-making activity. Writing instruction cannot be reduced to linguistic structures, nor can it be isolated from social context. Many scholars emphasize the need for meaningful social context in writing. Smith (1983) writes, "Teachers must engage writers in purposeful written language enterprises and protect them from the destructive effects of meaningless activities" (p. 566). Authenticity, meaning, learning, and context become key words in the new pedagogy.

Composition Research

Since the 1960's, discoveries about the nature of writing and writing instruction have influenced current pedagogy. The studies and the presentation of data from the studies tend to mirror the different aims and purposes of process, product, and new pedagogies. Composition studies tend to deal with two groups: writing students and writing teachers. At times, the reciprocal nature of this process makes the two difficult to separate. The mysteries of composing, the writing process, are difficult to quantify. Hull (1989) notes that the rallying point in the revolution of writing research is the concept that writing is an activity that can be studied, a process with an identifiable set of processes and behaviors.

Case Studies in Composition Research

Significant ideas that have changed composition instruction have resulted from case study research concerned with the writing process. Much of the profession's new composition lore has come from protocol analysis, case studies, ethnography, and other more "qualitative" forms of inquiry. Important early studies represent the shift from product to process studies of writers.

Emig (1971), through her case study observations of 12th-grade writers, showed that the writing process can be observed and described. Shaughnessy (1977) became interested in the

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habits and writing processes of remedial writers (she referred to them as basic writers). This study helped teachers understand that teaching grammar and punctuation skills in isolation was not useful, and that "there is no reason why a [basic writer] must wait until all his sentence problems have been dealt with before he can begin work on the organization and development of academic papers" (p. 274). Perl's (1979) case study work with basic college writers involved student interviews and thinking-aloud protocols.

Qualitative Research and Writing Instructors

Research about writing instructors has traditionally been conducted using surveys, questionnaires, and other quantifiable methods. But recently, qualitative methods, including interviews, case studies, and ethnographies, have provided useful information about teachers. Context-sensitive studies involving naturalistic inquiry have provided valuable new perspectives.

For example, Bissex and Bullock's (1987) Seeing for Ourselves is a compilation of thirty-six writing teachers' case studies, representing teacher perspectives about students and about themselves from all levels of writing instruction. Perl & Wilson's (1986) Through Teachers' Eyes, an ethnographic study, is an inside look at teachers who taught writing at different grade levels (from first to eleventh) in the Shoreham Wading River Central School District.

Four first-year teaching assistants were the subjects of Farris' (1987) ethnographic study about writing instruction. Farris used classroom observations, interviewing, and class logs to understand the interrelationships between the TA's training, the college's culture, their personal beliefs about writing, and their instructional practices.

Teachers, shaped by composition lore, have their own stories to tell. An instance of autobiographical revelation can be seen in Moran's (1991) "A Life in the Profession," in which he describes his changing professional values since entering Princeton as a student in 1954. From such stories a new perspective of composition instruction emerges. Gaining such data can illuminate new theories and help explain the effects of lore in composition instruction.

Qualitative Research

The factors or characteristics associated with quantitative research studies (hypothesis testing, sampling control, replicability and reliability) are not always recognized as essential in qualitative research. Erickson (1986) describes what a qualitative study should contain: empirical assertions; narrative vignettes; quotations from observational field notes and interviews; maps, tables, or figures; interpretive commentary; theoretical discussions; and a description of the research process itself (cited in Smith 1987, p. 177). Smith (1987) writes that "qualitative research is based on the notion of context sensitivity. The social scene is thought to be so complex that one cannot anticipate it sufficiently to select a priori a single or even a few meanings for a construct and adopt a uniform way of measuring it" (175).

Qualitative Study

Qualitative studies have certain characteristics in common. Eisner (1991) describes six features which make a study qualitative: 1) Qualitative studies are field-focused; researchers tend to study settings as they are; 2) Qualitative research relies on the self as instrument. The self is "the instrument that engages the situation and makes sense out of it" (p. 34); 3) Qualitative research has an interpretive character, especially concerning matters of explanation of events and the meanings associated with events; 4) Qualitative studies rely on expressive language and the use of voice in the text; 5) Qualitative research shows attention to particulars, not to abstraction; 6) Finally, qualitative research studies share similar criteria for judging their success. "Qualitative research becomes believable because of its coherence, insight, and instrumental utility" (p. 39).

Subjectivity and Inquiry

Generally, questions are raised about subjective bias, reactive arrangements, and other threats to validity and reliability that might hamper the generalizability or transferability of qualitative studies. Eisner (1991) writes that "methods or prospectives that deviate from accepted norms are often viewed as mistakes; they threaten competence and conventional lore" (p. 51).

The phrase self-as-instrument (Eisner, 1991; McCracken, 1988) is often associated with qualitative research techniques. Miles notes, "This metaphor is a useful one because it emphasizes

that the investigator cannot fulfill qualitative research objectives without using a broad range of his or her own experiences, imagination, and intellect in ways that are various and unpredictable" (cited in McCracken, 1988, p. 18). Eisner (1991) believes that the expert observer possesses a sensibility, a wider array of schema for analyzing data. The qualitative researcher brings a special signature, a special stylistic flair, to the investigation.

Generalizability of Qualitative Research:

Brewer and Hunter (1989) write that questions of generalizability "ask how far and with what degree of accuracy can the empirical findings pertinent . . . be generalized beyond the particular situations that have been investigated" (p. 43). Qualitative studies have different purposes than quantitative research. Different criteria must be used to judge their success. Eisner (1991) writes that qualitative research "becomes believable because of its coherence, insight, and instrumental utility" (p. 39)

In their discussion of the problems related to reliability and validity in qualitative research, LeCompte and Goetze (1982) describe two concepts: comparability and translatability. Comparability requires the researcher to delineate the characteristics of a group studied or the constructs generated so clearly that they can serve as a basis for comparison with other and like groups. Translatability means that research methods have been so carefully described that they can be successfully duplicated in another research situation.

METHODOLOGY

Population

The population studied was a census of the full-time English instructors at the Signal Peak Campus of Central Arizona College who taught English 101 as part of their faculty load. The rationale for using this group was based on the tenets of purposive sampling (Patton, 1987). According to Brewer and Hunter (1989), purposive sampling:

> Purposive sampling. . . is a claim on the part of the researcher that theoretically significant, not necessarily statistically significant, units have been selected for study. (p.114)

The English faculty participating in this study were theoretically significant. They were employed as writing instructors and met state certification requirements.

Research Design

The design combined a number of techniques and methodologies used by qualitative researchers. The works of Patton (1990, 1991), Yin (1989), and Miles & Huberman (1984) were used to frame the design and data collection methods in the study. The methodology recommended by Miles & Huberman (1984) was adapted to the data analysis section of the study. Because data were collected and analyzed using personal interviews, surveys, and document analysis, this study was multimethod in nature (Brewer and Hunter, 1989). The design elements of this study are schematically represented in Appendix A, page 25 .

The Case Study Paradigm

The qualitative case study approach, as defined by Yin (1989), was adapted to the design methodology of this inquiry. Using Yin's terminology, this inquiry was an embedded single case design; that is, it was a study of a single site case (the composition department) with clearly defined units of analysis (the individual faculty members). The embedded single case study was appropriate in this instance because it serves what Yin calls a descriptive or revelatory purpose.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionists believe a situation only has meaning through interpretations of it, and that individuals define situations in different ways because each individual brings with him/her a unique past and a certain way of interpreting what she or he sees (Blumer, 1969). The situation, in this case, was teaching composition.

Theory-Driven Qualitative Study

Unlike qualitative designs which rely on purely ethnographic methods (such as complete immersion in a foreign culture), this study was a theory-driven design (Smith, 1987). This differentiated it from more loosely-designed inductive studies which rely on emerging awareness or grounded theory development. In a deductive qualitative study, the researcher begins with theoretical or operational constructs and then develops design characteristics and methodologies.

Instrumentation

This multimethod study was field-focused and emphasized the following methods of data collection: 1. depth interviews; 2.researcher-produced surveys; 3. document analysis. In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument and must be prepared to deal with a wide array of data (Eisner, 1991; Gummeson, 1991; Wolcott, 1975). The researcher's academic credentials, work history, current research training, and organizational awareness gave him the preunderstanding necessary to conduct such a context-sensitive study.

Interviews

This multimethod study used depth interviews as the centerpiece of data collection. The decision to use qualitative interviews was made because "we cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world–we have to ask questions about those things" (Patton, 1990, p.196). Interview data allow the researcher to learn new perspectives about the world. Comparing interviews to other means of collecting information, Patton (1991) writes "the application of questionnaires or standardized personality and attitude measures is not likely to reveal . . . highly contextualized information" (392).

The interviews were be based on what Michael Patton (1990) calls the general interview guide approach: "outlining a set of issues that are to be explored with each respondent before interviewing begins" (p. 198). The interviewer is free to establish a conversational style, "but with the focus on a particular subject that has been predetermined" (p. 198). Questions were formulated based on concepts found in the review of literature and the researcher's preunderstanding of the phenomenon being studied.

Survey forms

The English faculty completed a researcher-produced survey which asked them specific questions about their professional status and assumptions. Survey questions took a variety of forms. Some were open-ended, while some asked for yes/no responses.

Documents

The documents are print documents such as course syllabi and catalogue course descriptions. These documents represent stated learning activities, course requirements, and expectations. Key words and phrases used in the documents helped to demonstrate underlying curricular assumptions about writing instruction. Yin (1989) writes, "The most important use of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources" (p. 86). The documents are unobtrusive measures (Marshall and Rossman, 1989); the documents were not created for the purpose of the study.

Data Collection Procedures

Three individual depth interviews were conducted with each faculty member. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Documents were gathered from the college's instructional services office, the English department's office, and from the individual faculty. The survey forms were given to the faculty after the interviews were completed. Information gathered from the three sources was coded for analysis. The use of three separate data sources was a multimethod strategy known as triangulation (Webb et al., 1966). Triangulation helps to support a finding by showing that independent measures of a phenomenon agree.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data content analysis takes a variety of forms in qualitative research. Patton (1987) writes that "content analysis involves identifying coherent and important examples, themes and patterns in the data" (p. 150). The model for data analysis in this study was adapted from the work of Miles and Huberman (1984), who believe that data analysis is composed of three interactive components: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction helps the researcher "sharpen, sort, focus, and organize data in such a way that "final conclusions can be drawn and verified" (p. 21). Data display is an organized grouping of information that permits the researcher to draw conclusions. Conclusion drawing/verification is an ongoing process–conclusions have been prefigured since the beginning of the research process, but final assessments cannot be made until the research is complete. Conclusion and verification, according

to Miles and Huberman, must be subjected to "confirmability" so that we are not left with interesting stories "without truth or utility" (p. 22).

Coding

Data gathered from the interviews, documents, and surveys were subjected to the data analysis process outlined above. Specifically, the data were analyzed, reduced, and displayed through a process of coding and thematic grouping as recommended by the work of Miles and Huberman. Codes derived from the study's conceptual framework, research questions, hypotheses, key concepts, or important themes. Specific items which occur in an interview, survey, or document were assigned a code so that they could be effectively categorized, displayed, and evaluated. The codes were evaluated for thematic patterns, and the thematic patterns which developed became the framing mechanisms for the data displays.

Pattern Matching

A key method for analyzing the thematic patterns and developing data displays in this study was the process known as pattern matching (Yin, 1989; Miles and Huberman 1984). Yin writes that "such a logic compares an empirically based pattern with a predicted one" (p.109). In this case, the predicted patterns were represented by the study's propositions: these propositions are reflected in the study's research questions and review of the literature (Yin 1989). The study's major propositions can be summarized as follows:

1. Individual composition teachers have specific beliefs about writing instruction which shape their teaching methodologies
2. These beliefs have their sources in the body of knowledge known as composition lore: training, research, publications, and tradition.

Data Displays

The data display is a visual representation of data analysis. Miles and Huberman cite the following functions of displays. Displays

1. show the data and analysis in one place
2. allow the analyst to see what further analyses are called for
3. make it easier to compare different data sets
4. permit direct use of results (p.79)

The displays were built from the emerging codes and patterns, and the contextual framework of the study. The formats generally appear as a summarizing table or figure. Data entries are also "multiform"; that is, they contain quotes, phrases, bits of text, or symbolic representations. Such data displays were built for each faculty member; displays were also configured to show departmental relationships. Data collected from the interviews, from the surveys, and from the document analysis process were displayed. The use of two levels of matrices insured that both units of analysis-- the faculty and the department-- were assessed.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The consensus of views which emerged from the triangulated data collection and analysis procedures form the responses to the study's research questions. In the study, 21 data displays were developed to report the findings and results. Samples of these are listed below. Data from the interviews, document analysis, and the surveys were used to construct the Faculty Beliefs Continuum. (Figure 1). Two umbrella codes were created to represent the opposite ends of the continuum. These are Meaning Controls Form and Form Controls Meaning. Faculty were placed on the continuum based on their researcher-perceived movement from/toward the general concepts recommended by the umbrella codes (MCF & FCM). Codes Related to MCF include non-traditional, new rhetoric, student-centered, meaning-making. Codes related to FCM include traditional, product, modes, teacher-centered, and lecture based.

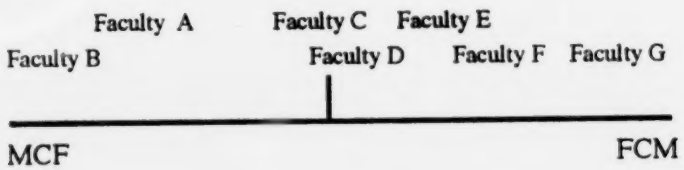

Figure 1

The four research questions were linked to those displays which provided answers to them. Responses to the research questions, and seven data displays (The Key Faculty Beliefs displays, Tables 1-7), follow below.

RESPONSES TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Introductory Observations

• Signal Peak English department faculty members show unanimous concern for the improvement of student writing ability. They show concern for the cognitive growth and effective well-being of their students.

• All faculty members emphasize writing process activities and consider drafting to be a critical part of writing instruction.

• All faculty members teach library use and research paper documentation techniques.

• The majority of the faculty received their Master's level training in literature. (8.75 courses average)

• Six of the seven faculty believe they were trained to be writing instructors.

• Four of the seven believe they were trained to be reading instructors.

• Five of the seven faculty teach the traditional modes of composition.

• Two of the faculty do not require a grammar handbook for their English 101 courses. Two teach grammar and usage directly from a grammar handbook. All seven use a rhetoric/reader in their courses.

• All seven faculty believe that a writing sample is a better indicator of student writing ability than the ACT ASSET placement test (which checks grammar and sentence structure mastery).

Research Question #1: How do faculty members view themselves as writing teachers?

• Faculty A wishes to be seen as a writing coach. Faculty A wants to be a partner within the classroom's writing community. Faculty A maintains a student-centered approach to writing instruction.

• Faculty B wishes to be seen as a writing coach. Faculty B wishes to be an arbitrator in the classroom. Faculty B wishes to negotiate form and structure individually with students. Faculty B Believes students must take the responsibility to learn grammar and structural matters.

• Faculty C believes a teacher has knowledge which can be shared with students. Faculty C believes in the modes. Faculty C will do anything as a writing teacher which helps to motivate students to write better.

• Faculty D teaches a lecture course but is evaluating the value of cooperative/collaborative learning. D is convinced that composition should be taught using word-processing. Faculty D does not wish to be known as a teacher of rules.

• Faculty E provides a teacher-directed 101 course. Faculty E believes that 101 should prepare students for other college classes and for the world of work. Faculty E believes that the composition instructor is directly responsible for what happens to students in the composition classroom and for the students' future writing tasks.

• Faculty F provides a teacher-directed 101 course. Faculty F is sensitive to the real world demands of writing. F wishes to help students develop better grammar skills. F teaches the modes because they provide a useful structuring mechanism for composition instruction.

• Faculty G provides a teacher-directed 101 course. Faculty G believes students should not have to be taught grammar in English 101 but does so when necessary. Faculty G wishes to be a purveyor of information to students.

Research Question #2: What curriculum models do the faculty members follow?

• Faculty A:	New	MCF
• Faculty B:	New	MCF
• Faculty C:	Process	FCM>MCF
• Faculty D:	Process	FCM>MCF
• Faculty E:	Product	FCM
• Faculty F:	Product	FCM
• Faculty G:	Product	FCM

Research Question #3: What assumptions does each faculty member have about writing and the meaning of the writing process?

• Faculty A sees writing as a meaning-making process. A views writing as a process. A understands writing to be a social activity. A believes writing is a means for learning.

• Faculty B believes that students invent the world through the writing process. Faculty B believes that writers need to understand the restrictive habits they have acquired from traditional writing instruction. Faculty B assumes writing is a consciousness-creating activity.

• Faculty C assumes that writers create meaning through writing. Faculty C believes that surface structure concerns come last in the writing process. C does not believe the writing process is a purely social activity.

• Faculty D assumes writers use writing to refine thinking processes. Faculty D believes writers must gain control over the writing process so that an engaging product can eventually be created. D believes that rhetorical ploys help with the writing process.

• Faculty E views writing and the writing process as a means for communicating with the world. E believes that form affects meaning.

• Faculty F believes that writing is evaluated by a critical, error-conscious world. F believes that drafting and other process-related activities are important, but F also believes that the final product should reflect a writer's ability to master grammar and syntax.

• Faculty G believes that a student's writing reflects something about his/her character. Like faculty E and F, Faculty G believes that the purpose of the writing process is to achieve a technically-sound written product. G assumes that work sheets and exercises can help a student with the writing process.

Research Question #4: How can the collective department "philosophy of composition" be defined?

• The Key Beliefs displays contain references to each faculty's beliefs about a department "philosophy of composition." (Tables 1-7)

• Each faculty member believes that the department, as a group, is sincerely interested in improving student writing. They refer to successful team paper evaluation activities as proof of their common goals and objectives in composition instruction.

KEY BELIEFS DISPLAYS

The data displays represented by Tables 1-7 contain excerpts from faculty interviews which describe their key beliefs about the writing process, writing instruction, and the department's philosophy of composition. The framing categories Effective Writers, Managing English 101, On Grammar, Department-wide philosophy of composition, and English 101 Class activities emerged during the interviews. These data contained in the tables are direct quotes from interview transcripts.

Table 1
Faculty A's Key Beliefs

Effective Writers...	think of their own writing processes	show successful engagement	show ownership	develop confidence and experience
Managing ENG 101	my students and I are in partnership	a sense of writing community needs to emphasized in the classroom	I help students see themselves as writers	I want to move students from thinking about only correctness
On Grammar	doing grammar exercises is not productive	handbook becomes a tool when students are ready to work on grammatical matters	students' own operating rules govern what they are doing	it is the students' job to fix surface errors to meet the reader's needs
Department-wide philosophy of composition	we need to understand writing is a chaotic process	101 should serve the student, not the academic community	our writing courses increase the web of language	we need to adapt instruction to fit the knowledge and experience webs of students
English 101 Class Activities	small and large groups, but not overly-structured groupwork, are effective	students need to find their own form & purpose, not learn modes out of context	portfolios help me become an evaluator instead of a grader	critical reading, writing, listening, and sharing develop writers

Table 2
Faculty B's Key Beliefs

Effective Writers...	must be allowed to create their own vision of the world	realize standard language forms need mastery	understand that words can change the world	learn to unlearn restrictive language habits
Managing ENG 101	the students and I associate structure and meaning	I give students the opportunity to see how things work	I create a positive community so students can be creative	the student is responsible for developing inner resources
On Grammar	I do not teach a grammar driven course	handbook is a reference; students develop their own strategies	students learn nothing positive from grammar workbooks	grammar emphasis has served as a gatekeeper
Department-wide philosophy of composition	we have a plurality of beliefs but we are not at cross purposes	some of my colleagues and I have become very experimental	students can apply what they learn in my classes to other classes and their lives	the department sincerely desires to help students improve their writing
English 101 Class Activities	portfolios allow student choice and give them the locus of control	my use of a cassette recorder to read back student drafts is effective	a text should be used for reading and reacting but not mode instruction	cooperative learning is good

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Table 3
Faculty C's Key Beliefs

Effective Writers...	are effective in terms of purpose	show originality of thought or quality of thought	create meaning with their pens	get things done through writing
Managing ENG 101	the modes are a clear way to show purpose	writing is not simply a social activity	I'm the one who directs classroom activities	I'm supportive of whatever helps students become motivated
On Grammar	a grammar book needs to be optional, not required	research shows no connection between grammar mastery and writing ability	correctness is important, but in process methodology is in the last stages of development	20% of my students' grades comes from surface structure matters
Department-wide philosophy of composition	the instructor is ultimately responsible for learning outcomes	101 should not be simply a technical service class; students should write about ideas	it is appropriate to group students by levels of ability	101's purpose is to help students make more of the world than what is obvious
English 101 Activities	writing process activities should be discussed	I spend only 10 minutes per class talking about form and structure	groups help foster process activities	we learn best by writing and rewriting

Table 4
Faculty D's Key Beliefs

Effective Writers....	are engaged in writing	receive A's; those who communicate pass	use different rhetorical ploys	get and hold the reader's attention
Managing ENG 101	I teach the modes because they have uses in non-English courses	I teach a lecture course but I find group work exciting	writing situations need to be meaningful but not necessarily occupation-oriented	we use writing to refine thinking processes
On Grammar	grammar is etiquette	I need to clarify the rules they have learned, not give new ones	it's beneficial to show problems teachers value: c.s., frags, and run-ons	good grammar does not guarantee effective writing
Department-wide philosophy of composition	we are moving away from being the teachers of rules	there's a new interest in literature as a means of engaging students	101 teaches writing skills and conventions which help in other courses	we recognize a writing skills continuum from 090 through 102
English 101 Class Activities	a rhetoric text can be used for modelling; no grammar book is required in my classes	I talk about process but I do not promote in-class free writing	portfolios may be a bandwagon activity; can we simply expect more?	I enjoy seeing students working together in groups

Table 5
Faculty E's Key Beliefs

Effective Writers...	accomplish his/her goal with writing	are able to respond to real life situations	are able to defend their position through writing	are able to develop thinking strategies and use various techniques
Managing ENG 101	I want to be involved with any paper I assign in terms of evaluation	library skills and research skills are important	I help students learn to answer essay exam questions	everything you write is basically persuasion
On Grammar	a tie exists between spoken and written language	students need to learn mechanics as well as content	analyzing sentences from student papers can be effective	students can be referred to the handbook after classroom discussion
Department-wide philosophy of composition	within a department, some differences in perspective are healthy	grammar and mechanics matter as much as content; this is a real-life perspective	we each have our own perceptions about writing instruction	101 can help with other courses and the real world of work
English 101 Class Activities	listing, brainstorming, and outlining help generate ideas	peer groups are not always effective--I should always be involved with evaluating work	we should analyze essays in terms of form and subject matter	my classes are teacher-directed--a typical day? whatever helps the students

Table 6
Faculty F's Key Beliefs

Effective Writers...	get thoughts down on paper as wanted	show balance between technical correctness and content	can apply the modes in appropriate writing situation	demonstrate confidence in different writing situations
Managing English 101	reading and writing go together	teaching strategies gives them a framework- It makes them think	we must be sure the basics are taught; the rules can be explained	I want to get the students excited about their writing
On Grammar	students need to understand the reasons for 'rules'	I've moved away from assigning exercises; I teach handbook reference now	a student placed in 101 should be able to find and correct surface errors	correct grammar helps a paper's readability
Department-wide philosophy of composition	we seem to agree about writing when we evaluate writing samples	we are interested in student success as writers	we have different methods but hope for similar outcomes	101 should teach students to write effectively in any situation
English 101 Class Activities	I try to get ideas generated	peer proofing is helpful but group projects do not seem to be effective	St. Martin's is good for essay models; I also use student essays	prewriting, drafting, discussing are helpful. I help them with rough drafts

Table 7
Faculty G's Key Beliefs

Effective Writers...	communicate clearly	communicate clearly no matter what topic or situation	are able to respond to what is happening in society	can synthesize information from external sources
Managing ENG 101	a writer must be readable and have something to talk about	students need to develop good work habits	the more frequently we write, the better the writers we become	my students should understand main stream issues
On Grammar	a breakdown in grammar blocks meaning	I should definitely teach grammar in 101; I like to explain why it matters	worksheets based on problems I see in class can be helpful	I am strict about poor grammar--it reveals a quality about the writer
Department -wide philosophy of composition	individual teaching approaches are healthy	we take different routes but achieve the same objectives	team review of diagnostic essays shows we have similar criteria for good writing	101 should help students to learn to distinguish between report writing and analysis
English 101 Class Activities	I encourage students to interview each other to gain new ideas	students have the option to do multiple drafts of papers	I feel responsible for editing and evaluating papers	I require in-class writing--they need to develop that skill

IMPLICATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

•The study has provided a useful and easily replicable model for identify an English department's beliefs about writing instruction and instructional practices.

•The study has shown that a departmental philosophy is represented in the belief systems of individual instructors.

•The study has shown that the English department believes a plurality of beliefs and instructional practices is healthy.

•The study found that faculty practices do not always mirror outcomes or competencies which are recommended or required in the department's course guidelines.

• The researcher believes studies such as this connect practice with theory.

•The researcher believes the differences in beliefs expressed by the evaluants in this study is a microcosmic representation of the profession's diverse perspectives.

•The researcher believes that studies such as this can help the writing profession come to a better understanding of composition instruction.

•The researcher believes that this study provides a model which could be used to identify beliefs and practices in other disciplines which influence instructional practices.

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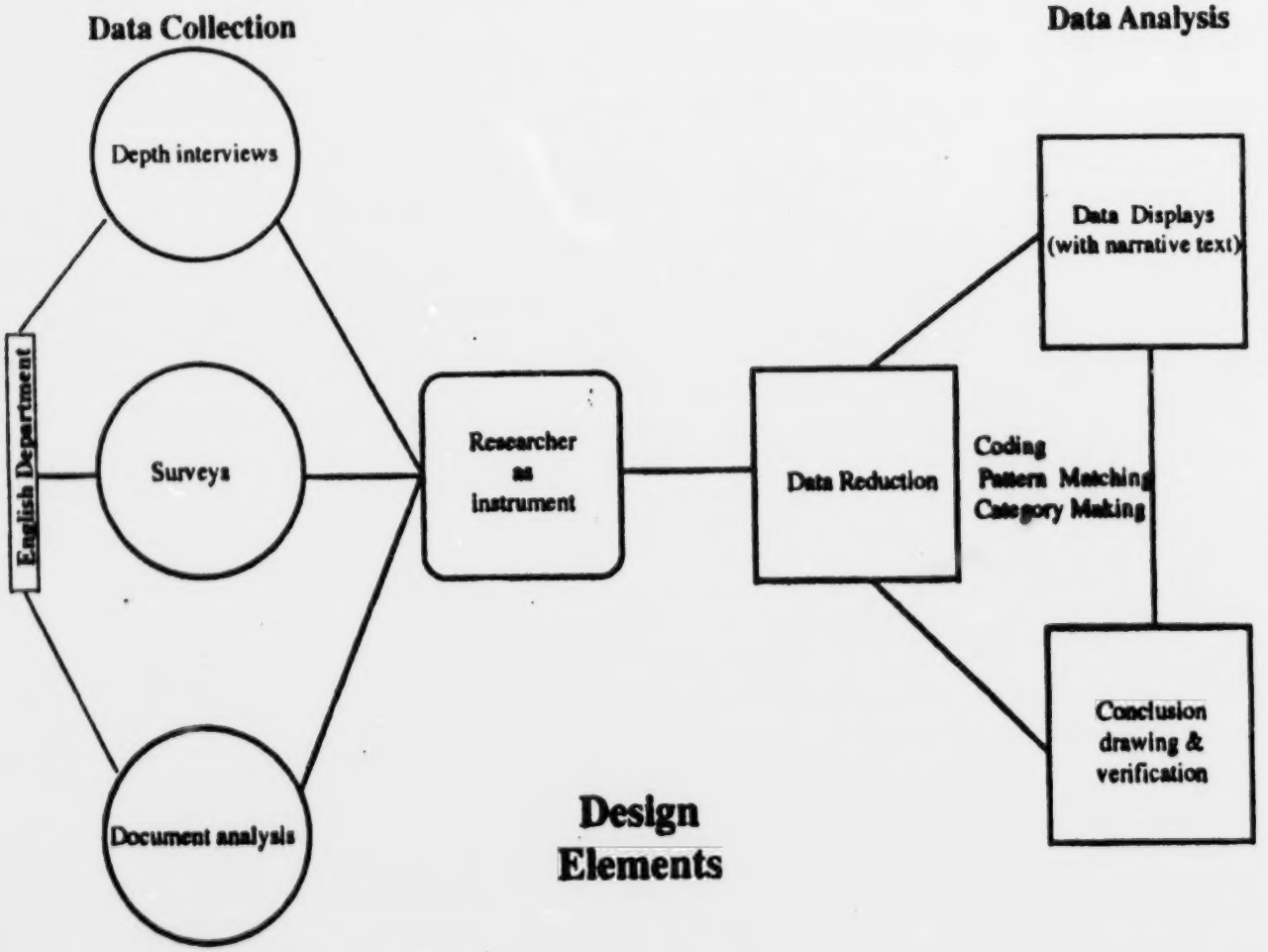
APPENDIX A
DESIGN ELEMENTS



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